

Remarks by USAID Mission Director Erin Soto, The National Workshop on Mechanisms and Policies for Combating Trafficking in Persons

Phnom Penh

February 5, 2008

- Excellency Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior; Excellency Hok Lundy, General Commissioner of the National Police; Excellency Ang Vung Vathana, Minister of Justice; and Excellency Ing Katha Pavy, Minister of Women Affairs.
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. I am so pleased to be here today to welcome you to the national workshop of the Ministry of Interior on mechanisms and policies for combating trafficking in persons.
- Over the past year, MOI has played the lead role in the development of the government's new strategy to combat trafficking in Cambodia. USAID along with other donors is pleased to have supported this effort and to sponsor this important workshop today.
- In only one year, the Royal Government of Cambodia has made tremendous strides in addressing trafficking with many significant, national level initiatives underway like: the establishment of the National Taskforce against Trafficking in Persons, the ratification of the Palermo protocol, the establishment of the High Level Working Group, the new Trafficking in Persons law and the decision to establish provincial taskforces comprised of multi-disciplinary teams.
- These initiatives without a doubt show the dedication of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the leadership of Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng to combat trafficking in persons. These achievements indicate that the government is committed to ending trafficking in Cambodia.
- The year 2008 brings us to the next phase in eliminating trafficking in Cambodia. The responsibility has now expanded to you -- to provincial level officials to put into action the initiatives established by the national government. Today's workshop intends to ensure each of you understands completely your specific responsibilities in implementing these new initiatives.

- Provincial officials are critical to ensuring that Cambodia's response to trafficking in persons is effective at the local level. Your leadership will ensure essential collaboration from all ministries working at the local level to prevent trafficking, protect the victims of trafficking and arrest and prosecute the criminals involved in trafficking. Only by working together on activities like raising awareness and providing minimum standards of care to victims, like collecting and using data on trafficking for enhanced planning and execution, and promoting cooperation between the police and the courts, only then can trafficking in Cambodia be eradicated.
- Without your full cooperation, the new laws and decrees against trafficking will not have their intended impact. The real fight against trafficking must be done in villages, neighborhoods, towns and cities by the governors, police, courts, and all relevant ministries. By combining national level leadership and will with the coordinated efforts of the provincial taskforces and multi-disciplinary teams, Cambodia will immediately reduce the incidence of trafficking in Cambodia.
- I would like to thank Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng for his leadership in combating trafficking. Also, special thanks goes to General Por Phak, for his vital collaboration in planning this workshop. He is a wonderful government representative.
- As well, I would like to recognize USAID's partner, The Asia Foundation, and thank them for their creativity, their passion and their impressive efforts in organizing today's event.
- On behalf of USAID, I welcome you to today's workshop. I know that it will be an informative event and I look forward to seeing the progress that Cambodia will continue to make in combating trafficking.